

# Jesse Brown Veterans Affairs Medical Center Clinical Psychology Externship

## *Externship Information (2017-2018)*

The Jesse Brown Veterans Affairs Medical Center (JBVAMC) is located two miles west of the Loop, Chicago's central downtown district. It is part of Chicago's large Illinois Medical District, which also includes Cook County Hospital, Rush University Medical Center and the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center. JBVAMC serves the almost one million veterans who reside in its catchment area. Many veterans are eligible for VA health care because they are disabled or economically disadvantaged.

### **Academic Affiliation**

JBVAMC is affiliated with the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine and Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. About 250 medical residents and 300 medical students rotate through the medical center each year, receiving training in medicine, surgery, psychiatry, neurology, dentistry, radiology, orthopedics, and more. Additionally, students from nearby academic institutions receive training at the medical center in disciplines such as psychology, nursing, pharmacy, social work, and audiology. Moreover, JBVAMC is one of the most competitive practicum sites in the Chicago area, drawing extern applicants from twelve local American Psychological Association (APA)-accredited clinical and counseling psychology programs.

### **Accreditation Status/Regulation**

The JBVAMC Clinical Psychology Externship Program is a self-regulated program that provides a variable number of assessment and psychotherapy practica each year. The program is not a member of ACEPT but attempts to minimize interference with ACEPT's selection and notification policies as much as is practical given the constraints of the program. The externship program works with individual academic programs on issues of competency evaluation and establishing training agreements. Placement in a externship practicum requires coordination between the externship program and the academic program to ensure coverage under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

The JBVAMC Clinical Psychology Internship Program is accredited by the American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation (CoA) and adheres to the guidelines of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). Our last completed accreditation review occurred in 2012, and we obtained full accreditation through 2020, the maximum period that can be granted to an internship setting. Accreditation documentation may be viewed upon request. APA accreditation has been maintained continuously since our first accreditation in 1979. More information on accreditation is available from the CoA of the American Psychological Association. The address is:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation  
Education Directorate  
American Psychological Association  
750 First Street NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4242  
202-336-5979  
[www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

The JBVAMC Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is a new program having started during the 2014-2015 year. This program has two tracks, one focusing on clinical training related to comorbid post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and pain-related disorders, and the other focusing on severe mental illness. The program adheres to the guidelines of APPIC and will be applying for APA CoA accreditation upon its eligibility to do so.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

The JBVAMC Psychology Externship program adheres to Federal Executive Order 13160, "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Race, Sex, Color, National Origin, Disability, Religion, Age, Sexual Orientation, and Status as a Parent in Federally Conducted Education and Training Programs."

### **Chicago Location**

Chicago is the third largest metropolitan area in the United States. JBVAMC is convenient to expressways and public transportation, including buses and trains that offer transportation to and from our building within blocks of its entrance. Chicago is a hub of arts in the Midwest, the home of world-famous architecture, and dozens of annual festivals. The music and food scene are especially robust and wildly diverse. Further information about Chicago is available at [www.CityofChicago.org](http://www.CityofChicago.org).

### **JBVAMC's Patient Population**

A veteran is defined as anyone who has served in the Armed Forces, whether during wartime or peacetime. Veterans commonly eligible for VA services include:

- Older veterans
- Combat veterans
- Disabled veterans
- Any female or male veteran who has experienced a military sexual trauma
- Indigent veterans with honorable, general, or medical discharges

The veterans at the JBVAMC have various cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds. We serve predominately African-American and male populations, although a younger veteran population, characterized by various cultural backgrounds and by both male and female individuals, have increasingly been utilizing our facility's medical services. Many veterans have multiple medical and psychiatric problems. Some of our

veterans have college or graduate degrees, but a majority have a high school degree or less education. There are more female veterans here than at most VAs. Many of our female veterans are single parents.

Common psychological problems include combat trauma, sexual trauma, depression, personality disorders, myriad anxiety disorders, and psychosis. Many veterans have addictions and may be dually diagnosed. Our veterans often display remarkable resilience and resourcefulness under very difficult circumstances. They are generally open about their problems and honest with themselves about their need for help. More information about our patient population is available in our diversity statement.

## **Training Philosophy**

The Department of Veterans Affairs employs more psychologists and trains more psychology trainees than any other American institution. We are proud to be part of the training mission of the VA. The training philosophy of the JBVAMC psychology externship program is as follows:

- **Scientist-Practitioner Model:** We adhere to a scientist-practitioner model of clinical training. In supervision, externs share their decision-making processes, formulate a course of action using their scientific knowledge of psychology, follow through with decisions, and critique the results of interventions. Staff members refer externs to appropriate professional research and writings so that externs become aware of the empirical validity for the treatments that are provided. Some staff members are involved in research or scholarly writing, and a number of our externs have presented at conferences or have published articles during their time with us.
- **Cultural and Systems Competence:** Externs assess the patient's social system, which includes the patient, the family, ethnic and cultural issues, and the community. Also, externs negotiate the patient's treatment system, including the treatment team and other programs at the medical center. Externs are trained to meet the special demands of mental health service delivery to urban, ethnic minority populations.
- **Placing Training Above Service Delivery and Revenue Generation:** The fulfillment of the externs' training needs remains the paramount consideration of the program. At no time will externs' needs for clinical training be subordinated to the agency's need to generate revenue nor will it substitute for the delivery of services by the staff. The externs' service delivery activities are predominantly learning-oriented because they involve opportunities for clinical exposure, experiential learning, discussion and application of clinical intervention, and supervision.

## **Training Program Overview**

Externs are provided various training options; however, despite the fact that externs are interviewed and typically offered externships through a particular track under the

assumption that they will be rotating through that track, **no rotations can be promised to an extern.** Each rotation is supervised by a psychology staff member:

### **Structure**

Externship tracks typically involve either 1) two six-month rotations (approximately July–December and January–June), or 2) one year-long rotation (approximately July–June). Externs must be willing to dedicate 20 hours per week to their physical presence and involvement in the psychology externship program. Of the 20 hours, a minimum of 1 hour of supervision, along with 1 hours of mandatory extern didactic seminar participation (tentatively scheduled on Fridays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.) is expected, although the exact amount of supervision is frequently increased to meet the expectations of the extern’s academic program.

Most rotations involve a combination of assessment, psychotherapy, individual and group intervention and frequently involve interdisciplinary team consultation and involvement.

**Rotation Options** *\*\*\*Please note that the following track options are subject to change pending staff supervision availability..\*\*\**

- **Adam Benjamin, Jr. CBOC:** This advanced therapy track occurs at JBVAMC’s Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Crown Point, IN. Externs will carry an individual caseload of Veterans with a variety of concerns including PTSD, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and psychotic disorders. Externs will also have the opportunity to co-facilitate groups. As part of the training, externs will receive at least 2 hours of individual supervision weekly. This externship is designed for students who are in at least their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of graduate training (i.e., students who have completed at least one prior clinical practicum).
- **Addictions:** This track may include work focused in the Addictions Treatment Program or the Drug Dependence Treatment Center at the main hospital in Chicago. The optimal candidate will have 1) a background in addictions in clinical experience/coursework or, in its absence, a strong motivation to learn about addictions; 2) a background in dual diagnosis and relevant Evidence Based Practices (e.g., Motivation Enhancement, CBT) in clinical experience/coursework or, in its absence, a strong motivation to learn these areas; and 3) a strong clinical foundation, both academically and in patient work, in diagnostic interviewing, individual therapy and group therapy. Opportunities may include psychological testing as well as intermediate and advanced psychotherapy. Advanced practicum students may be given preferential consideration.
- **Day Hospital Program:** This track, focusing on intermediate or advanced psychotherapy, provides opportunities centered on the acute management of crises or transitions—with considerable psychoeducation regarding more

chronic conditions—in an intensive outpatient partial hospitalization program. As a member of a highly interdisciplinary team, the extern typically serves as the primary therapist and case manager for two patients at a time, with regular options to obtain supervised training in Prolonged Exposure therapy for PTSD as well as other approaches to therapy. The extern co-leads between 7-8 therapy groups each week, including one of the three intensive therapy groups that meets three times weekly. Externs participate in milieu therapy and case discussions/presentations. The ideal extern has some prior individual psychotherapy experience with veterans and is motivated to explore a range of approaches to the therapeutic process, including management of high-risk clinical situations and psychosocial stressors in the “real world.”

- **Health Psychology:** This track offers both broad and in-depth experiences in health psychology, typically across four different rotations with four different supervisors. Likely rotations include Pain Management, Health Psychology, Weight Management, and Health Promotion Disease Prevention. Trainees typically have the opportunity to spend six months on each rotation (two rotations between July and December, and two rotations between January and June). For the past two years, JBVAMC and Northwestern University also have hosted a Health Psychology Seminar, and Jesse Brown health psychology externs have been able to attend the seminar, with topics including Reproductive Medicine, Sleep Medicine, and Organ Transplants, among others. The ideal candidate will have a strong interest in health psychology, and the externship has historically placed trainees in a competitive position for an internship in health psychology.
- **Neuropsychology:** This track is designed for externs who have already established fundamental knowledge in the biological basis of behavior/general neuroanatomy through academic coursework, have successfully completed a neuropsychology assessment course in their academic program, and have already demonstrated experience in neuropsychological assessment via completion of at least 1 year in clinical neuropsychology assessment as an extern. The ideal candidate should already possess basic skills in test administration/scoring and neuropsychology report writing. This training experience offers both broad and in-depth experiences in clinical neuropsychology, including assessment, identification of rehabilitative recommendations, collaboration with multidisciplinary teams regarding recommendations, family/patient education, and, if appropriate, cognitive rehabilitation. Clinical cases include, but are not limited to, the assessment of progressive neurocognitive disorders related to chronic medical conditions, movement disorders, various dementias, head trauma, strokes, seizure disorders, HIV, organ transplant, cognitive effects of chronic substance use, and ADD/ADHD. There are also opportunities to conduct adjunctive personality assessment. The ideal candidate will have a strong interest in pursuing neuropsychology specialty during internship.

- **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** This track focuses on the assessment of current PTSD and trauma-focused individual psychotherapy. A strong candidate would (a) have experience in general assessment and individual psychotherapy, (b) interest and motivation to learn about posttraumatic stress, (c) openness to various theoretical orientations, and (d) availability for the full day of Wednesday. Training opportunities will include developing a strong foundation in individual trauma-focused psychotherapy, assessment of posttraumatic stress, and interdisciplinary consultation. Externs may also have the opportunity to co-facilitate group therapy, depending on their schedule and group offerings during the training year
- **Transition Care Management Psychology:** This one-year track offers opportunities to work specifically with veterans who served in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn (e.g., recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan). Experiences may include co-facilitating at least two groups (i.e., mind-body interventions and a process/psychoeducational group), conducting thorough PTSD evaluations with CAPS-5 and other measures, carrying 10-12 individual patients at any given time, participating in conjoint couples counseling, and learning brief psychotherapy interventions (i.e., six sessions or less). The optimal candidate will be self-motivated, will be open to clinical orientations beyond CBT, and will have strong writing skills.

### **The Seminar Series**

Externs attend a mandatory weekly seminar every Friday, each lasting 1 hour. Topics are chosen for either their clinical relevance (focusing strongly on aspects of psychological assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment interventions) or on professional development. Some seminars are devoted to topics concerning diversity, various therapeutic approaches and interventions, and involve discussion of developments in the field of psychology.

## **The Psychology Supervisors**

There are 36 doctoral-level clinical psychologists at the JBVAMC, as well as administrative support personnel. Several of the psychology supervisors have faculty appointments in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine or at Northwestern University's medical school. More information about the psychology supervisors is available on the web site within the section on our staff.

## **Supervision and Evaluation**

The majority of supervision provided at the JBVAMC is individual supervision. Each trainee is assigned supervisors for each rotation. Hours of formal one-to-one supervision usually range from 1–2 per week. The supervisors are the psychologists who work in those program areas. The externs may evaluate their supervisors and present these evaluations in written form. Also, the supervisors provide externs an assessment of their

current state of professional development in a written evaluation. Scheduled evaluations occur at the end of each major rotation. The trainees' academic directors of training are provided with written progress summaries, upon request, at the completion of each rotation and throughout the training year as needed.

The training staff are aware that local academic programs maintain individual standards for their students' externship programs. The JBVAMC externship program does its best to meet these standards and to accommodate reasonable requests for the purpose of meeting academic programs' local policies (e.g., by using specific evaluations of student progress, as well as at times other than those described above, by providing audiotapes of students' sessions with patients, by agreeing to certain conditions of documentation). Please understand that the JBVAMC ultimately must adhere to VA regulations and relevant statutes in the training of its externs; thus, please provide expectations of participation as early as possible so that these can be reviewed in advance. Designated officials at the academic programs' institutions of higher education are also required to sign an affiliation agreement with the JBVAMC before its students can begin participating in our externship program.

### **Library Resources**

Our externs may use our VA's Medical Library. Also, the University of Illinois at Chicago's Library of the Health Sciences is just two blocks away. Our Medical Library supports our efforts in patient care, patient education, teaching, and research. Many online resources are available via the intranet, including OVID and Medline.

### **Training Year Dates**

Anticipated Start Date:	Monday, July 10, 2017
Anticipated End Date:	Friday, June 22, 2018
Holidays:	All federal holidays are scheduled days. An additional day after Thanksgiving and several days around Christmas Day and New Year's Day are frequently given as scheduled days off and announced at the beginning of the training year.
Leave:	A limited number of hours of leave are provided to be used throughout the year, shared between personal and sick time. Externs applying for internship are granted extra leave hours for the purpose of attending interviews.
Schedules:	Specific schedules are determined at the beginning of each rotation with the applicable supervisors.

## **Application**

### Checklist of Materials

To apply, please forward the following to the Director of Training at the email address below:

- A current letter of interest, tailored to the rotation(s) of interest
- A current curriculum vitae
- Graduate transcripts from the most recently completed academic period
- A letter of readiness from the applicant's academic director of training
- Two letters of recommendation

### Specific Procedures

- Candidates must submit all of their materials (except letters of recommendation/readiness) to the Director of Training in a single email using the subject title "Externship Application for [Candidate's First and Last Name]." Letters of recommendation/readiness may be included by the applicant in his or her email or in a separate letter from the letter writer. In the latter case, please have the writer email to the same address using the subject title "Externship Letter for [Candidate's First and Last Name]."
- The email from the applicant should be no larger than 700 kb in size.
- Any document submitted must be in .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf format.

**Failure to follow these procedures exactly as written may lead to delays in consideration or rejection of the application.**

**The deadline for submitting applications is 12:00 p.m. Central time on 12/5/16. Applications not fully completed by that deadline may not be considered.**

### Email Address for Applications:

Kenneth Andrew Lehman, Ph.D.  
Director of Training, Psychology Section  
Mental Health Service Line (116)  
Email: [vhachspychologytraining@va.gov](mailto:vhachspychologytraining@va.gov)  
Phone for inquiries: 312-569-8387 x59206

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